

on light-colored birds taken during the migrations in other parts of New England and elsewhere. It follows as a matter of course that there is no evidence, historical or otherwise, that Muskeget has ever harbored a "recognizable local race" of the Short-eared Owl. It would be indeed remarkable had such been the case, for the food resources of the island, excepting during the brief season when the Terns are breeding there, are not sufficient to supply the wants of more than two or three families of Owls, and a local race which at no one period of its existence could have been represented by more than a score of individuals would be something of an anomaly.

In this connection it may be worth remarking (since the fact seems to have been generally overlooked by American ornithologists) that there is a very decided and constant difference in coloring between the sexes of the Short-eared Owl, the males, when in fully adult plumage, being very much lighter-colored than the females. I have several males taken during the migrations at Ipswich, Massachusetts, as well as from the Pacific Coast, which are almost as pale as the Muskeget birds, and there is not a single fully adult male in my large series which is as dark as the average female. Dresser, in his 'Birds of Europe' (V, p. 258), states that the same sexual difference is found in Old World representatives of the Short-eared Owl.

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM BREWSTER.

Cambridge, Mass.

March, 1898.

#### An Untrustworthy Observer.

EDITORS OF 'THE AUK':—

*Dear Sirs:*—Those members of the A. O. U. who were present at the meeting last November will doubtless recall a paper read by Mr. Edwin Irvine Haines entitled 'The Summer Birds of the Catskill Mountains with remarks upon the Faunæ of the Region.' The paper indicated a 'chumminess' on the part of the birds that enabled the writer to fairly rain down records of species that ordinarily, during the summer season, are satisfied to keep out of the Catskills. Several sets of eggs of the Solitary Sandpiper (*Totanus solitarius*), Canada Jay (*Perisoreus canadensis*), and Ipswich Sparrow (*Ammodramus princeps*) had been obtained, while such species as the Hudsonian Chickadee (*Parus hudsonicus*) and White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) had been found hobnobbing with the equally abundant Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*) and Tufted Titmouse (*Parus bicolor*). A tray full of skins, chiefly without labels and in winter plumage, was exhibited in support of the many extraordinary discoveries of which the above are samples. On asking Mr. Haines for

the loan of his birds, he informed me that a portion of them had been sent to Dr. Merriam in Washington, but the following were submitted to me, viz.: White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*), Golden-crowned Kinglet (*R. satrapa*), Hermit Thrush (*Turdus aonalaschkae pallasii*), Gray-cheeked Thrush (*T. aliciae*), Bicknell's Thrush (*T. a. bicknelli*), Olive-backed Thrush (*Turdus ustulatus swainsonii*), Tufted Titmouse (*Parus bicolor*), and Pigeon Hawk (*Falco columbarius*). Mr. Haines assured me the Thrushes had all been obtained between the middle of June and the middle of July; the other birds (the Kinglets represented by no less than seven specimens) bore labels indicating capture in the Catskills on various dates between June 10 and June 19, 1897. Suffice it to say, not one of these birds was in breeding plumage! This statement will, I think, be borne out by Messrs. J. A. Allen and D. G. Elliot, who also examined them.

Now the point of all this is that Mr. Haines's ornithological statements are not in accordance with facts, and as he has figured in print a number of times during the past year or two, it is but natural to view all of his work with suspicion. One article, 'The Kinglets and their Distribution,' (The Osprey, I, Feb. 1897, pp. 73-75), asserts that he has found both species breeding in the Catskills. As a matter of fact his "June" birds are *not* breeding birds. It is not likely now that his additions to the Catskill fauna will ever be published, nor will the breeding of Brünnich's Murre (*Uria lomvia*) at New Rochelle, N. Y., as announced on a program of the Linnæan Society of New York, become a record, but it is time to put a check to such perverted ambitions, and while I am quite unbiassed by any personal animus, I feel that my fellow members of the A. O. U. should be warned against a person who has shown himself to be so eminently underserving of credence.

Yours very truly,

JONATHAN DWIGHT, JR.

New York, N. Y.,  
Feb. 21, 1898.

---

## NOTES AND NEWS.

DR. ANDERS JOHAN MALMGREN, a Corresponding Member of the A. O. U., who died in Helsingfors, April 12, 1897, was born in Kajana, Finland, in 1834. His life was quite eventful and successful in many directions. Thus, in 1869, he became Professor of Zoölogy at the University of Helsingfors; in 1874 he was made Commissioner of Fisheries; and in 1889 he was appointed Governor of the northernmost province of Finland.

As a zoölogist Malmgren paid most attention to the fauna of the boreal regions of Europe, and he made valuable contributions to our knowledge